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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, teach us the mystery of life. Help us to not be victims but victorious in the living of our days. Lead us to a place of understanding, in spite of sorrow and pain. Make us more than conquerors, because You love us.

Today instruct our lawmakers as they seek to do Your will. As they perform their daily tasks, guide their priorities. Show them Your truth so that they will be instruments of Your purposes. When their light of hope is threatened, renew them with faith in Your providence and power. Transform their lives from a hurried succession of days into a walk with You that brings enduring peace.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 1, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the prayer, the Pledge, and whatever remarks the two leaders make not count against morning business, that morning business be a full hour.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the period of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill. Last week cloture was invoked on the substitute amendment. Approximately 200 amendments have been cleared or voted upon. There are lots of them still pending. Last week Senators LEVIN and WARNER worked their way through some of these. I don't know how many votes we will have this evening on germane amendments, but we will know before long. Any amendments that might be offered have to be germane and have to be timely filed. Currently pending is a first and second-degree amendment relating to contracting. Any votes today will begin around 5:30. It is too early to indicate how many votes will take place. Once action on DOD authorization has been concluded, it is my intention to have the Senate consider the

DOD appropriations bill, to be followed by the consideration of Commerce-Justice-Science. Then we have a circuit court judge and several district court judges we plan on working on this week.

We have a lot to do. Hopefully we can finish quickly. We have next week the work period at home. Because of our being here for the time we are, having the weeks sometimes longer than what we would like, I have a lot to do at home. I am sure all other 99 Senators have as well.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. REID. Freedom of speech is one of the country's most cherished values. Nothing sets us farther apart from the countries and regimes we oppose than our belief that everyone's opinion matters—everyone's—and that everyone has a right to express it. That is why when we hear things on the radio and other places that are offensive, by and large we tolerate them. But last week Rush Limbaugh went way over the line. While I respect his right to say anything he likes, his unpatriotic comments cannot be ignored. During his show last Wednesday, Limbaugh was engaged in one of his typical rants. This one was unremarkable and indistinguishable from his usual dribble which has been steadily losing listeners for years, until he crossed that line by calling our men and women in uniform who oppose the war in Iraq "phony soldiers." This comment was so beyond the pale of decency we can't leave it alone. Yet he followed it up with denials and an attack on Congressman JACK MURTHA, who was a 37-year active member of the Marine Corps, a combat veteran.

We have been debating the Iraq war in the Senate and throughout the country, not for months but for years. There are good, patriotic Americans who favor the war and good, patriotic Americans who oppose President

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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